

Lieutenant Colonel Laurel has served and excelled at every level of our Army, and she exemplifies the patriotism, fidelity, and commitment to which every citizen should strive.

From her early enlisted career as an airman in the Wyoming National Guard to her Active-Duty service in key positions ranging from medical platoon leader and company commander to personally advising the Army surgeon general and the Secretary of the Army, Kelly has been exceptional in every respect. Examples of her ever-increasing responsibilities include medical platoon leader, 61st Area Support Medical Company at Fort Hood, TX, company commander, Headquarters, 52d Medical Evacuation Battalion; and later the chief of the Management Division, 18th Medical Command in Korea; and the chief financial officer for the widely dispersed Heidelberg Hospital and its nine outlying clinics in Germany. Her work and potential was so great that then-Major Laurel was soon personally selected to serve the Army's surgeon general as the senior budget analyst, the chief of the Financial Health Policy Division, and finally as the senior congressional affairs coordinating officer.

Fortunately for me and so many Members of Congress, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management and Comptroller soon recognized her outstanding abilities and selected Kelly to serve as the Army's senior budget legislative liaison. I and my colleagues in both Chambers have personally benefited from Kelly's extraordinary intellect, keen analysis, and unmatched determination. During her tenure in this position, Kelly routinely worked the most sensitive, complex, and critical Army actions involving the Senate and House Appropriations Committees. Her wisdom and unmatched expertise led the Army to extraordinary success in obtaining vital funding for the most critical medical, environmental, and behavioral health programs and ensured that our soldiers and their families had the necessary support they needed during these years of war. Moreover, she was instrumental in obtaining vital funding for the restructuring and expansion of the Army National Cemeteries Program. Most recently, recognizing her leadership and exceptional intellect, the Secretary of the Army selected Kelly to be his deputy chief of strategic initiatives. In this capacity, Kelly advised the Secretary and other Army senior leaders on the development and implementation of critical service-wide policies and programs that will benefit the Army for many years to come.

Kelly's superb career and character is also a true testament to the exceptional support and example provided by her family. As the daughter of first-generation Americans, Kelly was taught early the value of hard work, commitment, and selfless service by her parents Jose and Dolores Montemayor. Moreover, as a child of a

career military family, Kelly learned to embody the values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage before she even knew there was an Army. As she has repeatedly demonstrated, to Kelly, these are not ideals but character traits; not platitudes, but requirements and expectations of every citizen. Clearly, her character, work ethic, and patriotism are examples to us all. We owe the highest praise and tribute to this great American and her family.

Accordingly, on behalf of a very grateful nation, I join my colleagues today in recognizing and commending LTC Kelly Marie Laurel for nearly 25 years of service to this country. Although, to the Army, Kelly is irreplaceable, I am certain this exceptional citizen will continue to make great contributions to the United States as she embarks on the next chapter of her life.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. LEVI WATKINS, JR.

• Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, today I wish to salute Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr., a renowned cardiac surgeon who will retire at year's end from Johns Hopkins Medicine. During his 4-decade-long career, Dr. Watkins has had a profound impact on American health care—through the countless patients he has treated, the students he has recruited and mentored, and the cultural diversity he has advanced.

Levi Watkins, Jr. grew up in Montgomery, AL, the third of Dr. and Mrs. Levi Watkins, Sr.'s six children. At the Alabama State Laboratory High School, Watkins excelled in academics and athletics: he graduated valedictorian and was selected for the Montgomery All-Star basketball team. It was in Alabama that he witnessed the early days of the civil rights movement. As a member of the First Baptist Church of Montgomery, Watkins developed a close friendship with his pastor, the Reverend Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, and later he attended Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, where he was introduced to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the King family.

Watkins majored in biology as an undergraduate at Tennessee State University, where he was elected president of the student body and joined Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Alpha Kappa Mu honor society, Beta Kappa Chi honor society, and many other notable organizations. Watkins also led many student movements on campus and graduated with highest honors.

Dr. Watkins' medical career has been one of monumental firsts. In 1966, he integrated the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine as the first African-American student ever admitted. He was later selected to become a member of Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor society. Watkins arrived at Johns Hop-

kins Hospital in 1970 as a general surgery intern and became the first African-American chief resident in cardiac surgery in the institution's history. There, in 1980, he performed the world's first implantation of an automatic heart defibrillator in a human—a procedure that is now performed worldwide and has since saved tens of thousands of lives. In 1991, Dr. Watkins became the first African-American at Johns Hopkins promoted to full professor of cardiac surgery. He was named the first African-American associate dean in the School of Medicine and established the nation's first postdoctoral association, helping to revolutionize the culture of postdoctoral education in the United States. Today, there are more than 50 such associations across the nation.

Dr. Watkins has been a fierce advocate for fairness and diversity. He joined the Hopkins School of Medicine's admissions committee in 1979, and began recruiting minority applicants and sponsoring an annual welcoming and networking reception for new students. In 1982, he founded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration at Hopkins, an annual event that has brought an illustrious array of speakers to Baltimore, including Coretta Scott King, Rosa Parks, Maya Angelou, Stevie Wonder, and Taylor Branch.

In October 2002, Vanderbilt University established a Professorship and Associate Deanship in his name; in October 2005, Dr. Watkins' portrait was unveiled at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine honoring his life's work; and, in 2008, Vanderbilt bestowed upon Dr. Watkins its "Most Distinguished Alumnus Award."

Since 2006, when he stopped performing surgery, Dr. Watkins has remained a powerful presence and an important influence on Johns Hopkins and the city of Baltimore. In December 2008, he was honored by the National Black Caucus of State Legislators with the Nation Builders Award, along with President-Elect Barack Obama, and James H. Meredith. In January of 2012, he was appointed co-chair of Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake's transition team for health and human services.

I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. well as he embarks upon the next phase of his lifelong journey to improve the health and well-being of others.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. LYNN KILCHENSTEIN

• Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Lynn Kilchenstein, president of the New Hampshire Technical Institute, who will step down from her position at the end of the year. Dr. Kilchenstein has demonstrated exceptional leadership at NHTI for the last 10 years, and I thank her for her strong commitment to the students of New Hampshire. While I know she will be missed by the school